

The Interdivision Information Unit: How It Directed CIA, FBI, Community Relations, and Army Intelligence Spies

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On the day of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, a member of the Justice Department was in a room near Dr. King's at the Lorraine Motel./1/ He was not a member of the FBI but the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department which had been ordered to spy on black leaders according to the final report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. The FBI Division headed by the late William C. Sullivan was only a part of a vast spy operation which included the CIA's CHAOS program, Army Intelligence, and the Community Relations Service in addition to the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division. All were under the umbrella of the Interdivision Information Unit (IDIU) established by Attorney General Ramsey Clark in 1967 at the request of the President and White House Staff to coordinate Government intelligence efforts against "potential troublemakers and civil disturbances."/2/

The Department of Justice was the coordinating unit and the IDIU was placed under the supervision of a committee composed of the Director of the Community Relations Service and the Assistant Attorneys General in charge of the Civil Rights, Criminal, and Internal Security Divisions./3/ Under Attorney General Clark's direction, domestic spying escalated to a massive operation aimed at black community leaders, antiwar activists, and those actively questioning the conclusions of the Warren Report. Elected officials and other prominent persons opposed to the Vietnam War were also spied on./4/

The Senate Intelligence Committee reported that the IDIU's receipt and use of Army intelligence had the effect "of providing the Attorney General's implicit authorization for a vast expansion of military surveillance of civilians during this period ... and Army intelligence officers received specific oral requests from the Justice Department."/5/

An examination of the IDIU computer printout by a previous Senate Committee had disclosed such prominent names as Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Caesar Chavez, Bosley Crowther, and Mrs. Coretta King had been under military surveillance./6/ Military personnel were also active at Dr. King's funeral./4/

Daily reports of the IDIU went directly to Ramsey Clark and his Deputy Attorney General. Less detailed weekly summaries went to other senior officials in the Justice Department, the White House, the Pentagon, the CIA, the Secret Service, and Metropolitan Police Departments./7/

Attorney General Clark's close supervision continued after Dr. King was assassinated. When he learned from his subordinate at the Lorraine Motel, who immediately telephoned him, that Dr. King had been shot, Clark called the White House, and then Cartha DeLoach, Assistant Director of the FBI. Gerald Frank related that Clark directed copies of every FBI report be sent immediately to him and asked to see all the evidence. Clark held daily conferences with FBI personnel, and also received reports from Police Director Frank Holloman in Memphis./8/

The morning after the assassination, Clark, Cartha DeLoach, and the Director of the Community Relations Service, Roger Wilkins, went to Memphis. According to Frank, who apparently wrote his book with the cooperation of the Justice Department, Clark was counting on Jim Laue at the Lorraine Motel and other Community Relations aides in Memphis to help avoid friction, and DeLoach to coordinate FBI work on the scene with Robert Jensen, the agent in charge in Memphis./9/

The Community Relations Service became involved in spying after the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights recommended its members should "funnel information to the (Interdivision Information) unit." He said he recognized the Community Relations Service risked losing "its credibility with people in the ghetto" but he believed the Department could maintain the "confidentiality of the information."/10/ Attorney General Clark approved the recommendation. Clark said it was imperative that the Justice Department obtain "the most comprehensive intelligence possible regarding organized or other purposeful stimulation of domestic dissension, civil disorders, and riots."/11/

Clark warned, "Planning and creation of the unit must be kept in strictest confidence."/12/

After they had left the Justice Department, in an amazing display of chutzpah, the former Attorney General, Ramsey Clark, and the former Director of the Community Relations Service, Roger Wilkins, headed a "Citizens' Group" in conjunction with Princeton University's School of Political Science to study the FBI because of "revelations of some of the activities of the bureau in surveillance of private citizens and in what can only be called political intimidation of various individuals and groups." "Post-Dispatch" reporter James C. Millstone wrote, "The announcement was made as members of both houses of Congress were calling for congressional investigations of FBI activities."/13/

In September, 1967, Attorney General Clark had sent a memorandum to Director J. Edgar Hoover directing the FBI to develop sources and informants in black nationalist organizations to determine the size and purpose of the groups. Clark told Hoover, "It is most important that you use the maximum resources, investigative and intelligence, to collect and report all facts bearing upon the question as to whether there has been or is a scheme or conspiracy by any group of whatever size, effectiveness, or affiliation, to plan, promote, or aggravate riot activity ... We have not heretofore had to deal with the possibility of an organized pattern of violence ... by a group of persons who make the urban ghetto their base of operation and whose activities may not have been regularly monitored by existing intelligence sources ..."/14/

The Justice Department and the FBI found, however, that they lacked the manpower and the funds to mount the vast intelligence operation ordered by Clark. Therefore, President Lyndon B. Johnson instructed the Army to work with the Justice Department./7/

The CIA was also drawn into the IDIU operation and spied on thousands of Americans./15/

Attorney General Clark formally established the IDIU in December, 1967, which in reporter Richard Halloran's phrase, "resulted in the wide-ranging continental United States intelligence operation that blossomed in 1968."/7/

On the day of Dr. King's assassination, Dr. James H. Laue,* a member of the Community Relations Service, was in Room 308 of the Lorraine Motel. Dr. King was in Room 306. Jim Bishop wrote that the "man in 308, James Laue of the Justice Department, ... was, in effect, the government's polite shadow."/1/

The Senate Intelligence Report clearly showed that whatever the FBI did in Memphis in 1968 was closely supervised by the Attorney General and the committee directing the IDIU. As Dr. Laue was under orders to "funnel information" to the same committee, it is irrelevant whether or not the FBI had surveillance on Dr. King at the time of his death; (the FBI claimed it did not/16/); because in 1968, members of the FBI, the Community Relations Service, the CIA, and Army Intelligence were all part of one vast spy operation directed by the Interdivision Information Unit.

References

- /1/ Jim Bishop, "The Days of Martin Luther King, Jr.," G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971, p. 61.
- /2/ United States, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976 Senate Report Nos. 94-755, "Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans," II, pp. 79-80.
- /3/ "Intelligence Activities," III, p. 498.
- /4/ UPI Report, December 1, 1970.
- /5/ "Intelligence Activities," III, p. 501.
- /6/ Ibid., p. 503.
- /7/ "The New York Times" News Service, April 5, 1971.
- /8/ Gerald Frank, "An American Death," Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972, pp. 117-120.
- /9/ Frank, p. 123.
- /10/ "Intelligence Activities," III, pp. 492-493.
- /11/ Ibid., p. 499.
- /12/ Memorandum from the Attorney General to the Deputy Attorney General dated November 9, 1967. Cited in Victor Lasky, "It Didn't Start With Watergate," The Dial Press, 1977, p. 213.
- /13/ "St. Louis Post-Dispatch," April 28, 1971.
- /14/ "Intelligence Activities," III, pp. 492-493.
- /15/ Ibid., p. 681.
- /16/ Jake McCarthy's Column, "St. Louis Post-Dispatch," July 26, 1978. □

* Dr. James H. Laue is now the director of the Center of Community and Metropolitan Affairs at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Correction:

In the editorial "Public Hearings..." in the June-July, 1978, issue, line 1, replace "baited breath" with "bated breath." □

James P. Hosty, Jr., FBI Agent, Says House Assassination Committee Shuns His Testimony

"*The Boston Globe*"
(Sept. 11, 1978)
Boston, Mass. 02107

(From the United Press International, Dallas, Texas)

The FBI agent whose name, automobile license, and telephone number were in Lee Harvey Oswald's personal notebook when he was arrested for killing President John F. Kennedy says he believes House Assassinations Committee leaders do not want him to testify because he knows too much.

In a copyrighted article in today's Dallas Morning News, FBI agent James P. Hosty, Jr., was quoted as saying: "If they are going to try and contain this (investigation) like the Church (Senate intelligence) committee and the Warren Commission, they don't want me up there."

Hosty was the FBI agent in Dallas who monitored Lee Harvey Oswald's activities before the Kennedy assassination on November 22, 1963. He was transferred to the FBI's Kansas City, Mo., office in 1964. He is still based there and nearing retirement.

Hosty said he would "drop bombs" if called upon to testify publicly. He said he spent 30 hours telling the true assassination story to the Senate Intelligence Committee and another 3 1/2 hours speaking with Assassinations Committee investigators.

"I was called up there in November" Hosty told the Morning News, "and I started telling them what the story was and they apparently didn't want to hear it so they sent me home. They said 'We'll get in touch with you.'"

Hosty said he did not hear from investigators again and finally called and asked whether "you are through with me or not." He gave a deposition on Aug. 25 but is not scheduled to give public testimony at a Sept. 20 hearing on the FBI's and Justice Department's roles in the Kennedy assassination probes.

Hours after Kennedy was killed, Hosty was quoted in a top-level FBI memo as stating the FBI knew Oswald was capable of killing Kennedy. The memo was quoted by then-Dallas police chief Jesse Curry, who told reporters the FBI knew, but did not inform Dallas police, that Oswald was working in a building along the presidential motorcade route.

Hosty's name, auto license, and phone number were in a notebook Oswald had when arrested. The FBI did not disclose the fact to the Warren Commission in its initial reports on the notebook. The FBI finally made the admission in a "supplemental" report on Feb. 11, 1964 — only after it had been reported by various news agencies. □